

## Mentorship for New External Examiners: FAQ

---

### Introduction

1. All External Examiners are experienced in the design and implementation of programmes of study, including the marking and moderation processes however, those that are new to the role of External Examiner are required to be provided with support and guidance so as to understand their remit as a critical friend to the department/programme team.
2. The following FAQs provide further information about mentorship for new External Examiners.

### Will my external examiner need a mentor?

3. If your external examiner has not previously been an external examiner on a taught course programme then a mentor should be appointed.

### Does participation in viva examinations for research students, or organisation of programme at the home institution count as previous experience?

4. Whilst this will be useful experience, it does not mean that the examiner will be familiar with all aspects of the role of an external examiner on a taught course programme, and they should still receive mentorship.

### Who is eligible to act as a mentor?

5. A mentor should be another external examiner within the department. They should have at least two years' experience as an external examiner with the university. As they would need to complete a full cycle with the new examiner, a colleague in the third year of their tenure would be preferable. Examiners with extensive experience in acting as an external examiner may be an appropriate mentor in the second year of their tenure.
6. Where it is not possible to appoint a mentor from within the department, a mentor from another department in the same faculty/school should be identified.

### Can someone from the university act as a mentor?

7. In order to maintain impartiality, the external should not be influenced by current employees of the university, particularly those involved with the programme in question.

### Can someone from the new examiner's home institution act as a mentor?

8. Potentially they could, but this is not ideal as they will not be familiar with the systems in place at the university, and so would only be considered as a last resort.

### Do they need to be part of the same course, or covering the same kind of work?

9. Ideally they should be on the same programme, but in the case of smaller programmes with only one examiner, an external from another programme would be considered. They do not need to be reviewing the same material. It is their experience in completing external moderation activities and providing appropriate academic challenge as required to a programme team that is key

## What is the role of a mentor?

10. A mentor should be able to provide advice to the new examiner during their first year or two on the programme, and be available if the new external has any questions during this time. Their experience in external moderation and provided appropriate academic challenge provides support to the new examiner develop into their new role.

## How long does mentoring last?

11. Mentors should be available for the first two years of tenure for a new external examiner. If necessary, a current examiner can be requested to extend their tenure by one year (if they have not already been extended) to support a new examiner.

## What else can we do to support our new examiners?

12. The department should ensure that all examiners receive the documentation outlined in *Key Information for External Examiners*. Further information can be found on the QA website. All new examiners should be encouraged to attend one of the external examiner induction days organised by the External Examiner team each year, and to review the support material available from [AdvanceHE](#) (formally the Higher Education Academy).

## Document Control

<b>Document title:</b>	Mentorship for New External Examiners: FAQ		
<b>Version:</b>	1.2	<b>Date:</b>	N/A
<b>Location:</b>	R:\7.Quality Assurance\3. Policy Framework\5. External Examiners\FAQs for Departments on Mentorship		
<b>Initially approved by and date:</b>	Senate October 2007		
<b>Version approved by and date:</b>	Senate June 2024		
<b>Version effective from:</b>	October 2024		
<b>Originator:</b>	Academic Registrar		
<b>Contact for queries:</b>	Assistant Registrar (Academic Standards)		
<b>Cross References:</b>	Guidelines for Appointing Taught Course External Examiners Key Information for External Examiners <a href="#">Development Programmes for External Examiners   Advance HE (advance-he.ac.uk)</a>		
<b>Notes and latest changes:</b>	Updated July 2024 to meet new brand standard Update to name of document July 2024 (formally FAQs for departments on mentorship)		